THE MERRY MARVEL MESSENGER

"FACE FRONT, MARVELITES"

BLASTS AND BRAVOS ON TV SUPER-HEROES

Response to our bombastic boob-tube venture have been so overwhelming the past few weeks that the Post Office is threatening to make Irv Forbush help them deliver all of your letters!

But, at least we know that somebody out there must be tuning us in – 'cause Smilin Stan hasn't been able to dig his way through last week's mail! And, by now, the letters are piled up so high in front of his door that it looks like he may be confined to his office for eternity!

Just before we went to press, though, he did send up a smoke signal to let us know that a majority of you frantic fanatics think the show is a gas. Of course, on the other hand – a lot of you have spotted a few fumblin' flaws in the show, and you should see how many *we* found, ourselves!

Just like many of you, your brain-bustin' Bullpen realizes that the animation isn't up to Walt Disney, yet—and one or two of your respective hosts may be playing up a bit much to the bubble-gum brigade—but just wait till next season! All in all, we think old Wing-Head, Fish-Face, Green Skin, Goldilocks, and Shell-Head come off pretty well in videoville!

And we're mighty glad that enough of you agree with us to make Marvel Super-Heroes a top-rated show in its time-slot in most areas of the country! ★ ★ ★

WE NEED HELP, O, TRUE BELIEVER

Clutch your MMMS membership button to your bosom – keep calm, and, above all, don't fool with your cool! 'Cause this is your chance to become an important part of our glitzy little group!

Starting right now, pussycat, the MMMS needs you! No, not as a member! If you're reading this, we've already got you hawgtied! What we need from you is news! We want you to write and tell us what's going on among the rank and file of your own cavortin' chapters!

Get the picture? Good! Now, all you have to do is send your reports to Marvel Comics Group, News Dept., 625 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10022! We'll print the best of your batty bulletins in each future issue along with the name, address and MMMS number of the reporters who submitted them.

Ready? Then rush to your typewriters and get with it! After all, we can't print the news until you've made it!

And, in case your chapter hasn't made any news lately (and we shudder at the thought), we might suggest a few worthwhile projects! You might take a green-skinned monster to the cafeteria for lunch—or you might arrange for one of your classmates to be bitten by a radio-active spider! But, if neither of those ideas grab you, why not march on city hall in your Thing and Hulk sweat shirts. (Marvel T-shirts should be permissible dress for those few Marvelites who are still dwelling in the last century and haven't ordered their sweat shirts yet!) ★ ★ ★

INTRODUCING: *OUR NEWEST* BULLPEN BOMBSHELL!

Hang loose, frantic ones – and feast your eyes on the latest labor of love from your blushin' Bullpen!

We've been promising all of you a regularly-published newsletter for a long time now—and, like the man said, here it is!

After many long hours of sleepless brain-searching, we decided that the best way to print news is in – wouldja believe a newspaper? So, we've created the Merry Marvel Messenger for MMMS members only—to keep you clued-in on all the latest happenings in and around the Marvel Madhouse!

And, that's not all. We're gonna give all you madcap marchers a chance to tell us—and all the rest of Marveldom—what's cooking with your local chapters! You send us the news, and we'll do our best to print it—right on the pages of this, your exclusive club bulletin! But, we'll tell you how to go about sending in your nutty news elsewhere in this frantic first ish!

Now, in addition to telling you what's cooking in the Bullpen, we're also gonna toss in some crazy contests, frenzied features about all the Marvel Maniacs and a gob of other goodies too numerous to mention right now! And, if any of you have ideas of things you'd like to see in the Marvel Messenger—don't hesitate, let us hear about it! Got it? Got it!

So, before you get so excited about jotting down all of your scintillatin' suggestions that you forget to read the rest of the paper, we're gonna cool it—and just tell ya to feast your eyes and enjoy! After all, we did all'a this just for you, tiger! ★ ★ ★

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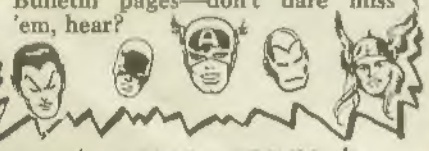
STOP THE PRESS!

The printers' union is threatening to picket us if we don't get this ish to the press room on the double—but we just had to take an extra sec' to tell you about our King-Size Special line-up for this summer! First, there'll be two brand new blockbusters—The Avengers and Daredevil—in addition to Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, Sgt. Fury, and (for you distaff devotees) Millie the Model (who's she?)! Now, brace yourselves for the biggest news of all! We're gonna pack each king-size super-hero ish with extra-long, original spectaculars, and lots of new feature pages—just like you've been demanding! Watch for more details each month on our Bullpen Bulletin pages—don't dare miss 'em, hear?



☆ MARVEL TRIVIA ☆

Maybe the $64,000 Question is dead—but, who needs it when you can play Marvel Trivia and win Benjamin Grimm's weight in no-gold! That's right, this is your big chance to add your name to Marvel's ever-growing list of no-winners! And, all you have to do is correctly answer all of the following questions in less time than it takes Irv Forbush to sweep the Bullpen floor! (That means you can finish the test by next Christmas and be a winner with time to spare!)

Now, before you get started—how's about a special Bullpen Wah-Hoo for Jivin' John Furutani of 38-41 Northern Drive, Fair Lawn, New Jersey, who submitted this baffling brain-buster!

Ready—then get crackin'! And ten lashes with a strand of wet spaghetti for any dyed-in-the-wool Marvelite who misses a single question!

1. What was the name of Peter Parker's uncle?
2. What rank and position did Nick Fury hold before his appointment as head of SHIELD?
3. What was Goliath's original means of changing his size?
4. What is Dr. Strange's first name, and what was his profession?
5. Name the cause of Tony Stark's heart ailment, and tell where he got it!
6. How did Ben Grimm get into college—where he met Reed Richards?
7. In what part of what galaxy do the Skrulls live?
8. What common cause first banded the Avengers together?
9. Why did Sub-Mariner search for the Trident of Neptune?
10. Through what kind of accident did Daredevil receive his powers?
11. Name the members of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants!
12. What was Dum Dum Dugan's profession prior to World War II?
13. Due to what discovery, made when he was a boy, did Dr. Doom gain his scientific knowledge and skill?
14. Who was Alicia's step-father?
15. What act of war brought Nick Fury and Pamela Hawley together—and later caused her death?
16. Name a feat twice performed by Dum Dum Dugan which is unique in the annals of war! (We'll give you a hint! It happened in issues 1 and 11—but, don't peek!)
17. Name Sub-Mariner's parents!
18. Recite the Hydra creed!

ANSWERS:

1. Benjamin Parker!
2. Colonel—agent of G-2!
3. Enlarging and decreasing gas sizes!
4. Stephen Strange—a brain surgeon!
5. He was struck in the heart by a piece of shrapnel in Viet Nam when he stumbled over a trip-wire booby trap!
6. He had a football scholarship!
7. Fourth quadrant of the Andromeda Galaxy!
8. The Hulk was on a rampage! They banded together to stop him!
9. To re-establish his right to the throne of Atlantis which had been taken from him by the Warlord Krang!
10. He was hit by a truck, and a canister fell from the truck and struck him in the eyes!
11. Magneto, Mastermind, the Toad, Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver!
12. Circus strong man and boxer!
13. The discovery that his mother was a sorcerer!
14. The Puppet-Master!
15. German air raids over London!
16. He exploded flying enemy aircraft by hurling grenades at them—once from another aircraft and once from the ground!
17. Princess Fen and Captain Leonard MacKenzie!
18. "Hail Hydra! Immortal Hydra! We shall never be destroyed! Cut off a limb, and two more shall take its place! We serve none but the master! As the world shall soon serve us! Hail Hydra!" ★ ★ ★

SPEAK YOUR MINDS, MARVEL MANIACS

Chaos in Washington! Turmoil in the United Nations! Confusion throughout the universe! Burnt toast in Aunt Petunia's oven! Why? Because your Bullpen Braintrust hasn't heard what you think of the latest additions to our ever-increasing cast of villains, heroes and supporting characters!

Only you, Majestic Marvelites, can remedy this situation! The fate of the world, the universe, and Benjamin Grimm's dinner rests on your heavily burdened shoulders! And we know you're not gonna let anyone down, tiger!

So, get out your trusty pen and Marvel stationery—and start writing! About what? We'll tell ya! We wanna know which of the new characters we've introduced over the past several months you want to see more of—or (gulp!) less of!

Tell us whether or not you dig The Inhumans, The Mimic, The Super-Adaptoid, Byrrah, Mary Jane Watson, The Leap Frog, The Shocker, The Black Panther, Jasper Sitwell, Mike Murdock, the goddess Sif, and any other crazy characters we've dreamed up lately (or even soonly!).

If Stan gets a letter from one of you saying that you don't dig Sue Richards' latest hairdo—he does what any editor whose latest brainstorm has been rejected. He cries a lot! Then, (and this is what separates Marvel from Brand Echh) though with heavy heart, our leader calls King Kirby and asks him to bend to the will of the masses and get Sweet Sue an appointment at the nearest beauty salon!

Now, while we try to find our way out of the corn field, you sit down and do your part in keeping those cards and letters coming in (didn't somebody famous say that?) to your blissful Bullpen!

But, remember—it takes a majority of opinions to rule! In other words, our minds can be changed, but we're no pushovers, Charlie! ★

MEET JACK KIRBY

THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF BELATED BULLPEN BIOGRAPHIES

And thus I was born, amidst questions...questions..."Can it be a Leprechaun?" asked Mrs. Rafferty. "A Prince of the Blood, maybe?" laughed Mrs. Goldberg. "Not that anemic runt," replied the good doctor as he shot a compassionate glance at my mother and handed my father the bill. Not quite convinced that he'd made medical history, the dazed physician clattered down three flights of unswept stairs and into the first rays of dawn. The place, New York City. The date, August 28th, 1917. It turned out to be a gloomy day like all the others. And I was there.

I was there thru rickety childhood, thru obnoxious and sullen adolescence, in the shadow of the chipped, brick walls of the slum, my first drawing-board.

Frustrated by bad spelling, I turned to bad drawing and improved both enough in my late teens to land a job in a small syndicate servicing weekly newspapers. From there to the Max Fleischer animation studios—where, for negligible wages, I learned that the human body, in motion, has value and beauty. When Popeye and Betty Boop took the initial steps to throw their pies, it was my job to complete the movement and speed of the action. This operation was called inbetweening.

When comic magazines blossomed as a field, I leaped in and drew for anyone who would let me tell a story. I became a variety of names, unleashing a torrent of diverse characters, among them the Blue Beetle, the first Captain Marvel. Super-Heroes were replacing human beings, and even dressed in glamorized underwear, they looked great in the wild blue yonder and added a new dimension to the lives of the comic fans.

While working on Captain America for Marvel Comics in the dawning "forties", I was producing at a furious rate. I remember slowing down only once, when a young rapscallion, peering into my cubicle suggested that I show more of Cap's home life, his aged, kindly mother, his wicked Aunt Agatha, and the stark, heart-rending background of Cap's early years. "Begone!" I cried, sorely put to drubbing him. "Take off and become an editor or something!" Well, by golly, he did. But before he got the name Stan Lee on his office door, I was busily engaged elsewhere, with the Boy Commandos, Newsboy Legion, Sandman, Manhunter and other features. The comic field was producing heroes while the world at large came up with villains to match. Hitler, Tojo, Mussolini, and the mess of miscreants stomping in their wake. Things got so bad during the period following Pearl Harbor, they finally drafted me. Then things got so bad in the Army, they actually used me in battle. At Metz, in France, serving in General Patton's Third Army, I was frozen into immobility by the sight of the advancing armor of the Heinrich Himmler Field Kitchen Panzers of the Waffen SS. I'd created another first, the "Human Road Block." This won me a PFC stripe and a lot of colorful language from my First Sergeant.

Well, the world just couldn't go on that way. The Axis powers, faced down by men raised side by side with Super-Heroes, had had it. Everyone hustled out of uniform and began raising families. I invaded Harvey Comics, drawing Stuntman, Boy Explorers, Boy's Ranch. Rushing into other strips, I did a teen-age feature called My Date, an adventure satire named The Flying Fool, and a bit of whimsy labelled The Rich Rabbit. There was nothing to be done then but innovate Romance Comics, pulverize the underworld in Headline Comics and Justice Traps The Guilty, and play Edgar Allen Poe in Black Magic. With Fighting American, I was ready for laughs. But fooling with the 3D madness and Captain 3D gave me the vapors. When I came out of the fog, I found I'd also done Win-A-Prize Comics, Bullseye, Foxhole, and Police Trap. Compounding these concoctions, I stumbled into Green Arrow and kept things humming by creating the Challengers Of The Unknown and a syndicated strip called "Sky Masters."

Returning to Marvel Comics was like re-entering the Halls of Ivy. In charge of comics was that young rascal, and, now, a bit of an older rascal, Stan Lee. We now share ideas, laughs, and stubby cigars. As for all the people who make Marvel what it is, no one could respect them more than I. And that includes our readers.

I have a wife named Rosalind, three lovely daughters, Susan, Barbara and Lisa and a fine son named Neal. To put it concisely, you name it, I've done it—but fairly. ★★★

SNEAK PREVIEWS FOR MMMS'ERS ONLY

What? You say ya didn't believe us when we said we were gonna clue in MMMS members about info that wouldn't be printed in our regular Bullpen Bulletins? Then hang in there—'cause when we promise you somethin', we ain't just whistlin' Dixie!

FANTASTIC FOUR: You're gonna fall off your perch (and so is Reed Richards) when Sweet Sue Richards announces that a heavenly happening is only a few months away—and we don't mean that Galactus is coming for a call! Then, before you know it, Sue's going to be knitting booties, and her everlovin' husband will be stocking up on cigars as they, along with all Marveldom, await the most requested event in comic history! But, don't worry about the F.F. being reduced to the Fantastic Three! While Sue awaits the blessed event, Johnny Storm's swingin' sweetheart, Crystal, is gonna fill in! But don't go blabbin' it all over town—this is still inside info, hear?

SPECIAL NOTE: With one of their race becoming a substitute member of the F.F. for a while, you can expect to see a lot more of the incomparable Inhumans—along with some earthly villains who might be content just to commit a casual crime or two for a change! (If King Kirby still remembers how to draw that kind!)

SPIDER MAN: We think you'll flip when everybody's favorite webslinger gets amnesia and pulls a couple of capers so shady that it finally looks like ol' JJJ might have been right all along! Or was he? And, you can bet your go-go boots that the classiest chicks who ever wiggled a Watusi are gonna be around for a long time to come! (If we ever did try to get rid of Gwen, M. J., etc.—Jazzy Johnny Romita would probably lead a protest march against us!)

THE AVENGERS: It's the biggest surprise since Irv Forbush passed an IQ test! Stan the Man and Rascally Roy managed to yank Big John Buscema (whose hulkable version of Ol' Green-Skin had more than its share of frenzied fans) away from his advertising agency work long enough to do a two-parter for us! Wait'll you feast your baby-blues on his version of everybody's favorite assemblers (including the mighty Hercules), as well as the Dragon-Man and the downright dastardly Diablo! NOTE TO DON HECK FANS: Don't despair—we just called in B. J. to give Dashin' Donnie a chance to get ahead! But, what a struggle it was to get Big John to stop drawing soda bottles long enough to knock out a comic book! Whew!

THE X-MEN: For all of you worry warts who've been drivin' Stan, Roy, and Werner batty asking who or what Factor Three is, you'll finally get the awesome answer! Over a number of issues—each of which promises to be a Marvel masterpiece in its own right—you're not only gonna learn more about the menace of the most dangerous band of evil mutants and general malcontents ever organized, but we're also gonna toss in some dynamic developments in the Cyclops-Marvel Girl romance—and more info about the amazing origins of the most terrific teenagers of all time!

DAREDEVIL: The downfall of the Masked Marauder is near at hand—and so is a possible wedding! The only question is, who should get married—Matt and Karen, or Foggy and Karen? We're leavin' this one up to you, Faithful Ones, so don't dare let us down! And, you'd better believe you haven't seen the last of Matt's torrid twin brother, modest Mike Murdock! (Smiley gets too big a kick out of writing the Brash One's dialogue!)

THOR: You demanded it—and if there's anything we can take, it's a subtle hint! Goldilocks is coming back to earth so we can give you more insight into the life of his alter ego, Dr. Don Blake! (If his license hasn't been revoked by now, that is!) And, on the romantic side, we're still flippin' coins about Thor's hearts-and-flowers scene! We tossed in stunning Sif because she was Thor's wife in Norse mythology—but, if you think Jane Foster is still what's happening, we'll bring her back! The verdict is yours, O Keepers of the Flame!

STRANGE TALES: We think we've finally found the perfect artist for the Mystic Master in Mirthful Marie Severin—and we're bettin' you'll agree! Especially after you see some of the way-out wonderment she's got in store for you! And, you can look for Nick Fury and SHIELD to encounter some threats that'll make Hydra look like a pacifists' convention, with Jaunty Jim Steranko both writing and drawing the strip!

TALES OF SUSPENSE: The wedding of Pepper Potts to Happy Hogan is just a few months away! We knew the identity of Pepper's intended spouse would knock ya for a loop, but you didn't expect her to wait around for Tony Stark forever, did you? Don't worry about our invincible industrialist, though—he'll be makin' the playboy scene again in no time at all! And, how about Gil (Sugar Lips) Kane's artwork on Captain America? It seems Gil has landed the prize plum of the Bullpen—'cause almost every artist we know is dyin' to draw ol' Winghead! We promise you that the greater Cap adventures are yet to come from the titanic team of Lee and Kane!

TALES TO ASTONISH: And, while we're talking about garrulous Gil, leave us not forget his increasingly popular version of the incredible, inedible Hulk! We're not sure yet about any long-range plans for our Jolly Green Giant, but we think we can safely assure you he won't be winning any Nobel Peace Prizes for a while! As for Sub-Mariner, a clamor has arisen from coast to coast for the regal Prince of Atlantis to return to the surface world more frequently—and that's just dandy with Wild Bill Everett! (He doesn't like wearing a snorkel while he draws, anyhow!) By the way, we thought you might be interested to know that we get more requests for our sensational superheroes to fight Subby and Hulky than any other characters!★★★

MARVEL SCOOP!

SCOOP! If you Merry Madmen think our current Super-Heroes TV show is somethin' else—and we hope you do—just wait'll you catch this tantalizing tidbit! Negotiations are now in the final stages with a major network to air Your Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man and the frankly fabulous Fantastic Four next fall in full-animation and blushin' color! We can't tell you the time or network just yet—but we can say for certain that they'll be the most eagerly awaited new series since we gave up drawing on the walls of caves!

SCOOP! Beginning in the near future, probably this spring, visitors to Hollywood will be in for a titanic treat—especially if they happen to be loyal MMMS'ers! We've just wrapped up a dauntless deal with Universal Studios to feature our happy-go-lucky heroes all over their fabulous film lot—which is open to visitors the year 'round! So, when you visit Universal City, be sure to have your picture taken with your favorite Marvel hero—and don't forget to drop by one of the two Marvel concession stands where you'll find all the groovy Marvel goodies on sale along with the very latest issues of all our matchless mags! We're poppin' our vests with pride at becoming a part of the swingin' Universal scene—and we suggest that all of you who are planning a trip to the West Coast try to make Universal City your first stop!

SCOOP! It's happened! The most demanded event of the decade! The peerless piece of Marvel merchandise you were beginning to think you'd never see (and, frankly, we weren't too sure about it ourselves)! Within the next few months, in all of our mags, we're going to announce a brand new MMMS membership kit—and we think that's about the most startling news since Irving Forbush's ant-farm got broken and the tenants made off with Fabulous Flo Steinberg's lunch! We're not telling just what'll be in the kit—but it will be sent out to all Branch Echh hold-outs who decide they'd rather switch than fight! However, don't all'a you long-term MMMS'ers think we've forgotten about you! You know that'll never happen! We figure a lot of you might want the new kit too—so, just to show how much we appreciate your undying loyalty for lo, these many months—we're gonna let you have the kit for just what it costs us! And, we might add, we don't think you'll find a better deal than that at Cousin Charlie's Bargain Barn!★★★

Hope you enjoyed our first surprise ish of the M.M. MESSENGER! Watch for future ones when you (and we) least expect 'em! Till then, hang in there, hero—you're our kinda guy!